

supposed to originate our thinking. Talking to one's self, or speaking aloud purposively, *is* thinking, and so is writing. We are accustomed to the process and it is a sufficient explanation of itself. If it is sufficient we do not need to search for another cause. To quote one of the greatest of thinkers, "Nature is pleased with simplicity and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Towards the end of his work the writer remarks that "The general trend of this book will undoubtedly, and harmlessly, be stigmatized as 'behaviourist,'" and most readers will agree as to its characteristic tone. But behaviourists have not, apparently, fastened particularly upon the matter of the existence, or non-existence, of that supposed separate entity called "mind."

C. F. ARDEN-CLOSE.

## SOCIOLOGY

**Stevenson, A. C., B.Sc., M.D.(Glas.), M.R.C.P., D.P.H.** *Recent Advances in Social Medicine.* London, 1950. Churchill. Pp. 241. Price 18s.

SOCIAL medicine is a term to which many meanings could be attached, and Professor Stevenson selects those fields in which, in his judgment, there has been a definite increase of knowledge in recent years. He has devoted a quarter of his book to infant mortality and an eighth of it to a methodological discussion of ways of measuring and recording physical growth in children.

Problems of childhood predominate throughout the book, doubtless attesting Professor Stevenson's contention that social medicine should be closely linked to preventive medicine, with a wide overlap common to both subjects. There are among the nine chapters of the book six devoted to problems of childhood, including the health of children in communal day nurseries, the health of the unmarried mother and her child, and school medical inspection, besides the three already mentioned on measurement of growth in children and infant mortality.

The chapter on problem families is an excellent summary of the material collected

by the pacifist Service units, Dr. Querido of Holland, and Drs. Savage, Stallybrass and Wofinden, together with the Luton report of Mr. Tomlinson; all of them familiar to readers of the *EUGENICS REVIEW*.

Professor Stevenson writes on this matter with sympathy and force. These qualities are also evident in his lucid and cogent review of the social problems of the unmarried mother and her child. After a concise statistical account of the position during the last decade he examines the mortality of illegitimate infants, and the causes of death, directly attributable to pregnancy, of unmarried mothers. From the latter it is clear that death, from diseases directly related to pregnancy, is more common than among married mothers, and that the disparity is due to sepsis following abortion. The author then considers the type of girl who becomes pregnant when unmarried, stressing that the vast majority of these have only one such illegitimate pregnancy. It is characteristic of Professor Stevenson's candour in stating his views, even when provocative, that he remarks, "they (girls who have had one illegitimate baby) would certainly seem to be less culpable than the woman divorced because of adultery, who in some ways is less harshly treated by society, for the unmarried mother breaks no vows or deceives no partner. In large part they are decent girls from respectable homes, of normal intelligence, though perhaps lacking in common sense." The difficulties encountered by these girls, when the pregnancy is recognized, are taken in turn: the feeling of isolation and shame; the embarrassment regarding arrangements for confinement; the insufficient provision of homes or hostels for them while awaiting decisions about the disposal of the child and uncertainty about adoption. The experience at Birmingham is quoted, where a very determined effort to help unmarried mothers, by providing homes, hostels and a social worker service, brought about a substantial decrease in the mortality of illegitimate infants so that in 1943 it actually fell below that of legitimate infants.

A useful chapter, somewhat out of keeping with its neighbours, is concerned with the

application of statistical methods ; it is contributed by Dr. A. E. Cheeseman, a colleague of Dr. Stevenson at Belfast.

In the final chapter there is a brief account of "psychosomatic illness." Professor Stevenson here shows an understandable and indeed laudable reluctance to accept the extreme claims made by some enthusiasts. He asks, not unreasonably, that adequate standards of proof should be required of those who propound sweeping psychosomatic and psychosocial arguments. He considers it would be unwise to entrust the care of the "stress disorders," commonly included under psychosomatic illness, to teams in which the diagnosis and treatment might in part be carried out by people without medical training.

If Professor Stevenson had not made his book a personal record of those recent advances which he found significant it would have lost a good deal of its readability and vigour. The gain in objectivity and comprehensiveness would have been a poor substitute, except for the student who wants a text-book or an impersonal work of reference.

HILDA LEWIS.

## STATISTICS

**Milbank Memorial Fund.** *Problems in the Collection and Comparability of International Statistics.* New York, 1949. Milbank Memorial Fund. Pp. 163. Price 50 cents.

THIS interesting book consists of eleven papers which were presented at a conference on international statistics of the Milbank Memorial Fund in November, 1948. It is worth noting that not less than seven of the authors are on the staff of the United Nations or their specialized agencies. Of the remaining four, three are in the service of the U.S. or Canadian Governments, the fourth is the late Walter F. Willcox, who contributes a brilliant historical review.

It is on the initiative of and the assistance from the United Nations Organization that progress in international comparability largely depends. There have been very few

examples in social and economic fields in which international comparability has been a primary objective of national statistical officers. Statistics are generally simple by-products of normal governmental process and are therefore seldom suitable for international comparison. Moreover, relatively few countries are really interested in and adequately equipped for the production of reliable statistics. "The United Nations and the specialized agencies have clear and defined responsibilities for promoting the compilation of comparable statistics. These responsibilities are being exercised with diligence and effect." Nevertheless "the real hope for comparable international statistics lies in the establishment and improvement of national systems. If these are established and improved comparability can be achieved." This view of the acting director of the U.N. Statistical Office requires perhaps some qualification.

It ignores the inherent theoretical difficulties which are largely associated with the "index number problem." Moreover, comparability presupposes a certain common background in the economic and political structure of the countries to be compared. Between the structure of collectivist and capitalistic societies, and particularly in the role played by the price system, the differences are so wide that they are bound to be reflected in their national statistics.

Attempts to make national statistics comparable are, of course, much older than the United Nations Organization or the League of Nations. The Statistical Society of London, now the Royal Statistical Society, was founded in 1834 and soon became the cradle of international statistics. The Belgian Quetelet has been hailed as the founder of international statistics. But, as Willcox points out, this is only part of the truth ; he was greatly aided by his pupil and friend Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the Prince Consort. Willcox suggests that conferences between Albert, Quetelet and other scientists during the London International Exhibition of 1851 gave rise to the first International Statistical Congress, which was held in Brussels in 1853. Because of German